

March 2, 2022

Government Administration and Elections Committee  
Connecticut General Assembly

Re: Making Voting Convenient and Safe

To Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony. My name is Janice Elliott and I am a resident of Hamden. **I write today to urge your support for two bills:**

**S.B. No. 184 (Raised)** An Act Extending Through November 8, 2022, Several Changes Regarding Election Administration as a Result of COVID-19 and Concerning Eligibility to Vote by Absentee Ballot, and

**H.B. No. 5262 (Raised)** An Act Revising Certain Absentee Voting Eligibility Statutes

My husband and I are seniors and voted absentee for the first time in the 2020 election as a precautionary measure to reduce potential exposure to Covid-19. Once we learned about the absentee voting process, we found it to be straightforward and highly convenient. Since my husband is immunocompromised, we were greatly relieved that we could vote in a way that protected us from exposure to COVID-19. We were but two of the 650,000 Connecticut voters who also chose to vote absentee in 2020.

**SB 184 allows COVID to be a valid reason to use absentee ballots for the November 2022 election.** We don't know how COVID-19 will present in the fall. We may have a new variant or a serious uptick in cases that will pose an exposure risk for people who are immunocompromised (and their family members) to vote in person. It also may make the work schedules of essential workers unpredictable, and therefore difficult to make time to get to the polling place on November 8. This bill would extend the exception passed for 2020 and 2021 into the fall of 2022.

**HB 5262 allows for the amendment of the current statute which defines the criteria for obtaining an absentee ballot to cover the fear of illness.** The amendment brings the language of the statute into greater alignment with the language of the Constitution.

These bills are pro-voter and reflect the on-going concerns we face as voters: pandemics, extreme weather events, shifting work or school schedules, incapacity, confusing messages about voting rights and responsibilities, or other unforeseen hurdles that may arise at election time.

Thank you for all you do to protect our right to vote and to make voting convenient and safe.

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